

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
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TO SECSTATE WAHSDC 6194
INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
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AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY MASERU
AMEMBASSY MBABANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L JOHANNESBURG 1490

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SF, PINS, PINT
SUBJECT: SOWETO GIRDS FOR THE 16TH.

REF: JOHANNESBURG 1159, CAPE TOWN 942

1. AS SOUTH AFRICA'S LARGEST BLACK COMMUNITY (SOWTO) NEARS
JUNE 16TH, CONCERN AND APPREHENSION IS BEING FELT IN WHITE
AREAS AND BLACK SOURCES REPORT "RISING TENSIONS" IN BLACK AREAS.
SOWETO ITSELF IS AT PRESENT TORN BETWEEN THOSE GROUPS WHO WISH
TO RETAIN THE DIGNITY OF THE OCCASION AND KEEP THE PEACE (THE
SOWETO STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL IS FIRMLY IN THIS CATEGORY)
AND MORE ALLEGEDLY IRRESPONSIBLE ELEMENTS WHO HAVE ALREADY STONED
BUSES AND ATTACKED WEST RAND BOARD EMPLOYEES ON AT LEAST TWO
OCCASIONSTHIS WEEKM

2. THE SSRC HAS CONTACTED SOWETO CHURCH LEADERS AND ASKED FOR
SPECIAL SERVICES ON JUNE 16TH. THEY HAVE ALSO PRIVATELY CONTACTED
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SOWETO POLICE AUTHORITIES (VISSER) AND TRIED TO ASSURE HIM THAT A
PLANNED MARCH WILL BE PEACEFUL. STUDENTS HAVE ASKED TOWNSHIP
RESIDENTS (INCLUDING HOSTEL DWELLERS) TO COOPERATE AND, AMONG OTHER
THINGS, REFRAIN FROM ENTERTAINMENT AND WEAR MOURNING CLOTHES. THERE
ALSO HAS BEEN A CALL FOR EMPLOYERS TO ALLOW EMPLOYEES TIME TO WORK
EXTRA THIS WEEKEND IN ORDER TO OBSERVE THE DAY OF MOURNING ON THE
16TH.

3. A SOURCE HAS STATED THAT FINAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE OBSERVANCE OF THE 16TH WILL NOT BE SET UNTIL THE 14TH (TUESDAY). AT THAT TIME A FINAL UPDATE OF ALL PLANNED ACTIVITIES WILL BE SENT.

4. COMMENT: ONE OF THE MORE INTERESTING ASPECTS OF THE 16TH IS THE INCREASING PRESSURES BEING BROUGHT TO BEAR ON BOTH SOWETO CHIEF VISSER AND THE SOWETO STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL--UNLIKELY ALLIES BUT INCREASINGLY FORCED TO DEPEND ON EACH OTHER DESPITE CRITICISMS FROM THE RIGHT AND THE LEFT. VISSER AND GHE SSRC LEADERSHIP ARE BOTH PLACING THEIR REPUTATIONS ON THE LINE IN AN EFFORT TO SEE THE 16TH REMAIN PEACEFUL. VISSER, UNDER SOME INTERNAL CRITICISM FROM THE RIGHT FOR BEING "TOO SOFT", WILL BE ON THE SPOT WITH MINISTER OF JUSTICE KRUGER (WHOM HE DESPISES) IF HE ALLOWS THE MARCH AND IT TURNS INTO VIOLENCE. THE SSRC LEADERSHIP, UNDER PRESSURE FROM THE LEFT, STANDS THE RISK OF BEING DISCREDITED IF THEY LOSE CONTROL AND THE POLICE TURN ON THE STUDENTS. TSOTSIS (TROUBLEMAKERS) ARE SURE TO BE INVOLVED AND THERE IS CONSIDERABLE DOUBT AS TO WHETHER THE SSRC WILL BE ABLE TO CONTROL THEM ALL. VISSER, ON THE OTHER HAND, WILL NOT ONLY HAVE HIS HANDS FULL CPING WITH THE TSOTSIS (AND DISTINGUISHING THEM FROM THE SSRC) BUT HE HAS CONFIED HE DOESN'T THOROUGHLY TRUST SOME OF HIS OWN MEN TO REFRAIN FROM PROVOCATION. IN SUM, THIS COULD BE A MAKE OR BREAK SITUATION FOR BOTH VISSER AND THE SSRC LEADERSHIP, INVOLVING A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF COURAGE ON BOTH SIDES FOR THEIR DETERMINATION TO SEE THINGS REMAIN PEACEFUL.

KIRBY

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